

Message Text

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USDEL SECRETARY FOR HODDING CARTER FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: PRESS ITEM -- ANDERSON ON VANCE

NO. 36

HEREWITH JIM ANDERSON PIECE SLUGGED "A REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK"

BEGIN TEXT

TEHRAN, IRAN -- SOME LEFTOVER NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS IN A
REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK AFTER ACCOMPANYING SECRETARY OF STATE
CYRUS VANCE TO THE LONDON SUMMIT, MADRID AND TEHRAN:

OIL HAS LEFT ITS MARK EVERYWHERE IN IRAN. PETROLEUM IS AT
THE BASE OF AN EXTRAORDINARY BUILDING BOOM IN TEHRAN, A
CITY BUILT ON THE ROCKY SOIL OF THE PERSIAN HIGHLANDS.

FROM MY HOTEL BALCONY, I CAN LOOK OUT ON THE TOWN AND SEE
EIGHT TALL BUILDINGS. SEVEN OF THEM ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION.
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TION.

OIL ALSO HAS STAINED THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CITY. THERE IS
A CONSTANT, POISONOUS-LOOKING HAZE THAT HANGS OVER THE

CITY. IT IS SMOG AND DIESEL FUMES, RISING FROM THE
ALMOST CONSTANT CONGEALED MASS OF CARS, TRUCKS AND BUSES

THAT MAKE UP THE TRAFFIC JAM.

THE TRAFFIC JAM IS A CONSTANT ELEMENT IN THE LIVES OF THE CITIZENS OF TEHRAN. THEY SPEAK OF IT LIKE SOME MALEVOLENT MONSTER THAT MUST BE PAID HIS TRIBUTE. TRAFFIC LIGHTS APPEAR TO BE OPTIONAL. SOMETIMES THE DRIVERS OBEY THEM, SOMETIMES NOT.

THE NEAR MISSES ARE TERRIFYING AS THE ORANGE-COLORED JITNEY CABS SKITTER FROM ONE SIDE OF THE STREET TO THE OTHER.

TEHRAN IS A SOPHISTICATED, PROSPEROUS CITY, BUT IT ALSO HAS PACKS OF WILD DOGS THAT ROAM AROUND THE OUTSKIRTS. CALLED "DITCH DOGS," THEY OCCASIONALLY GET NASTY AND DANGEROUS AND HAVE TO BE SHOT. THEY BARK AND YELP IN THE NIGHT, AND ONE WAKES UP IN THE ULTRAMODERN SKYSCRAPER HOTEL SUDDENLY THINKING OF DESERT VILLAGES AND THE DANGERS OF THE DARK.

CYRUS VANCE HAS BEEN SECSTATE FOR JUST OVER 100 DAYS NOW, AND THE INITIAL IMPRESSIONS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN CORRECT: HE IS A DECENT, KIND MAN, CAREFUL AND CONSIDERATE OF HIS STAFF, CAUTIOUS IN HIS STATEMENTS AND METHODICAL.

THESE ARE PRECISELY THE QUALITIES THAT DRIVE REPORTERS CRAZY AND SOMETIMES MAKE THEM YEARN FOR THE OUTRAGEOUS, UNREASONABLE, ENTERTAINING HENRY KISSINGER.

APPARENTLY THAT YEARNING EXTENDS TO THE FOREIGN PRESS AS UNCLASSIFIED

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WELL. THE TEHRAN DAILY KAYHAN RAN TWO PHOTOGRAPHS ON ITS FRONT PAGE THIS WEEK.

ONE OF THEM -- THE SMALLER ONE -- SHOWS VANCE AND THE SHAH TALKING QUIETLY.

THE OTHER -- ABOUT TWICE AS BIG -- SHOWS HENRY KISSINGER BEING HUGGED WILDLY BY IRAN'S AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, ARDESHIR ZAHEDI AT A PARTY.

IT WOULD BE STATING IT CHARITABLY TO SAY THAT CENTO DOES NOT LOOM VERY LARGE IN AMERICAN THINKING. IT EXISTS, SAID ONE OFFICIAL ABOARD THE VANCE PLANE, "BECAUSE NOBODY WANTS TO PULL THE PLUG." ONE OFFICIAL WAS HEARD TO ASK ANOTHER, "I'M NOT ON THE OFFICIAL LIST OF DELEGATES, AM I?" THE OTHER ANSWERED, "YES, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO ATTEND."

IRANIANS ARE OUTWARDLY SERENE, BUT THERE IS AN OCCASIONAL

REMINDER THAT THERE IS OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT. THE EMBASSY MINI-BUSES HAVE A LAYER OF BULLET PROOF GLASS ON THE INSIDE OF ALL WINDOWS. IT IS A REMINDER THAT THREE AMERICAN OFFICERS AND AN IRANIAN EMPLOYEE OF THE U.S. EMBASSY THERE WERE KILLED BY TERRORISTS IN THEIR CARS.

VANCE HAS A CERTAIN SCHOOLMASTER AIR ABOUT HIM, AND THIS HAS SET THE ATMOSPHERE FOR HIS RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS. EVERYBODY IS GIVEN ONE TURN TO ASK A QUESTION, IN TURN, AND WHEN HE TRIES TO GET ANOTHER ONE IN VANCE SAYS IN A PROFESSORIAL MANNER, LOOKING OVER HIS HALF-MOON GLASSES, "DIDN'T YOU HAVE A QUESTION ALREADY?"

CHRISTOPHER

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